

Vanessa braziliensis Moore, 1838: Faunal Element of the Canary Islands?

(Lepidoptera, Nymphalidae)

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Abstract

While stock-taking the genus *Vanessa* in the Zoologische Staatssammlung München (ZSM) I discovered three specimens of *Vanessa braziliensis* MOORE, 1838 that according to their labels are from the Canary Islands. Provided the labels are correct and the occurrence of the species at the stated locality can be verified, *Vanessa braziliensis* has to be added to the fauna of the Palearctic region.

Though described as bona species, the Brazilian Painted Lady *Vanessa braziliensis* MOORE, 1838 was long regarded a subspecies or variety of the American Painted Lady *Vanessa virginiensis* DRURY, 1773. It was W. D. FIELD in his revision of the genus in 1971, who demonstrated that there are in fact three distinct species that were going under the name "*Vanessa virginiensis*": *Vanessa virginiensis* DRURY, 1773, *Vanessa braziliensis* Moore, 1838 and the Mountain Lady *Vanessa altissima* ROSENBERG et TALBOT, 1914.

All three species originally are denizens of the Americas, but it is known that *Vanessa virginiensis* can also be found outside this area. The species has found its way to the Canary Islands and is resident there at least on Tenerife. Strays from the Canaries can reach Spain, Britain and the Azores.

Migrating individuals can also be found on Hawaii and F. BRYK (1946) reports a find from Japan.

In August 1998 I sorted through the pinned specimens of the genus *Vanessa* deposited in the Zoologische Staatssammlung München (ZSM). The three species mentioned above still were united under "*Vanessa virginiensis*". During my work I discovered altogether eight specimens that, according to their labels, were captured on the Canary Islands, five of which belonged to *Vanessa virginiensis*. Much to my surprise the remaining three specimens definitely proved to be *Vanessa braziliensis*. The texts on the labels of these specimens are as follows:

Specimen 1 (♀): "Teneriffa"

Specimen 2 (♂): "Kanarische Inseln"

Specimen 3 (♀): "Il.5.; Virginiensis; [symbol for female] Canar.; 86.II.5." "Sammlung Daumiller"

One so labelled specimen would have suggested the label is an error, but three specimens argue against that notion (even though they do not rule it out, either).

Thus, it is suggested that- just as *Vanessa virginiensis*- *Vauesna braziliensis* has found its way to the Canary Islands and may even be resident there. This may have been overlooked, due to the lack of awareness of the specific reality of the two taxa and because the two species are quite similar and not easily distinguished in the field.

On the upper surface of the forewing, however, three characters are found that allow an unambiguous identification (see figure 1): (1) The tawny, S- respectively Z-shaped pattern element within the cell in *Vanessa braziliensis* has a conspicuous white margin directed to the apex which is missing in *Vanessa virginiensis*. (2) The submarginal spot in interspace M1 always is blue, not white as in *Vanessa virginiensis*. (3) The females of *Vanessa virginiensis* in most cases have the subapical bar light tawny, while this bar is white in all females of *Vanessa braziliensis*.

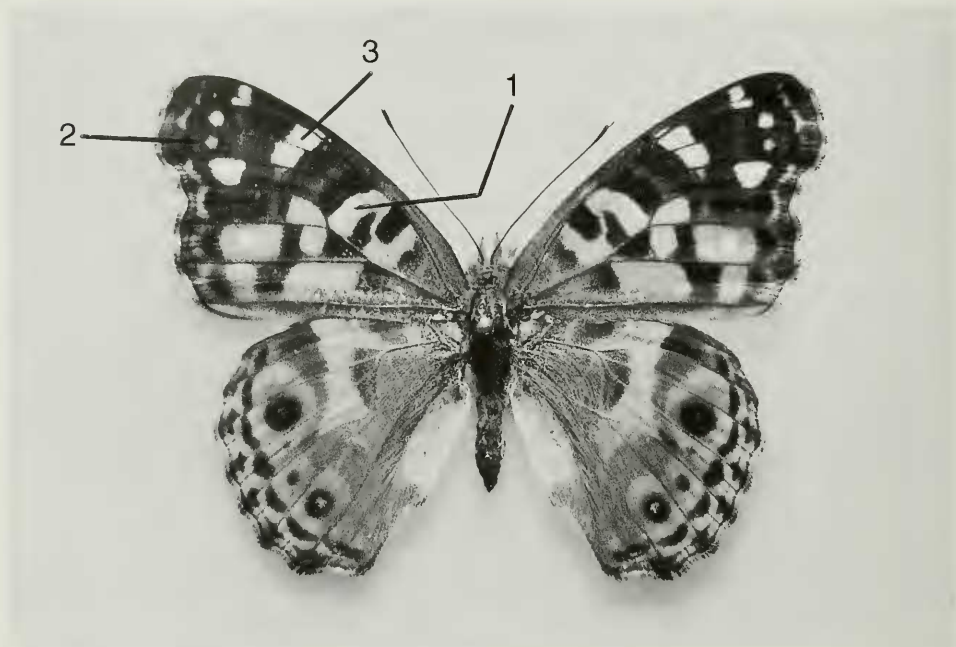


Fig. 1: *Vanessa braziliensis*. Dorsal aspect of specimen #3, a female from the Canaries. For numbered characters see text.



Fig. 2: *Vanessa virginiensis*. Dorsal aspect of a female from Tenerife for comparison.

On-the-spot observations are desirable to answer the question as to the occurrence of *Vanessa braziliensis* on the Canary Islands and whether it is resident there or just an accidental.

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(Insecta)

Wolfgang SCHACHT

Abstract

Collectors of insects are asked for donations of praemaginal stages for the ZSM. A simple method of conservation in alcohol is explained.

Die Schwierigkeit der Konservierung präimaginaler Stadien von Insekten

Es ist leider eine erschreckende Tatsache, daß Sammlungen von Jugendstadien bei Insekten weitgehend fehlen, obwohl beispielsweise Lepidopteren schon tausendfach gezüchtet wurden und auch weiterhin gezüchtet werden. Schuld daran ist vor allem die Schwierigkeit, Raupen bzw. Larven in befriedigender Weise zu konservieren, für den Amateur-Entomologen wäre